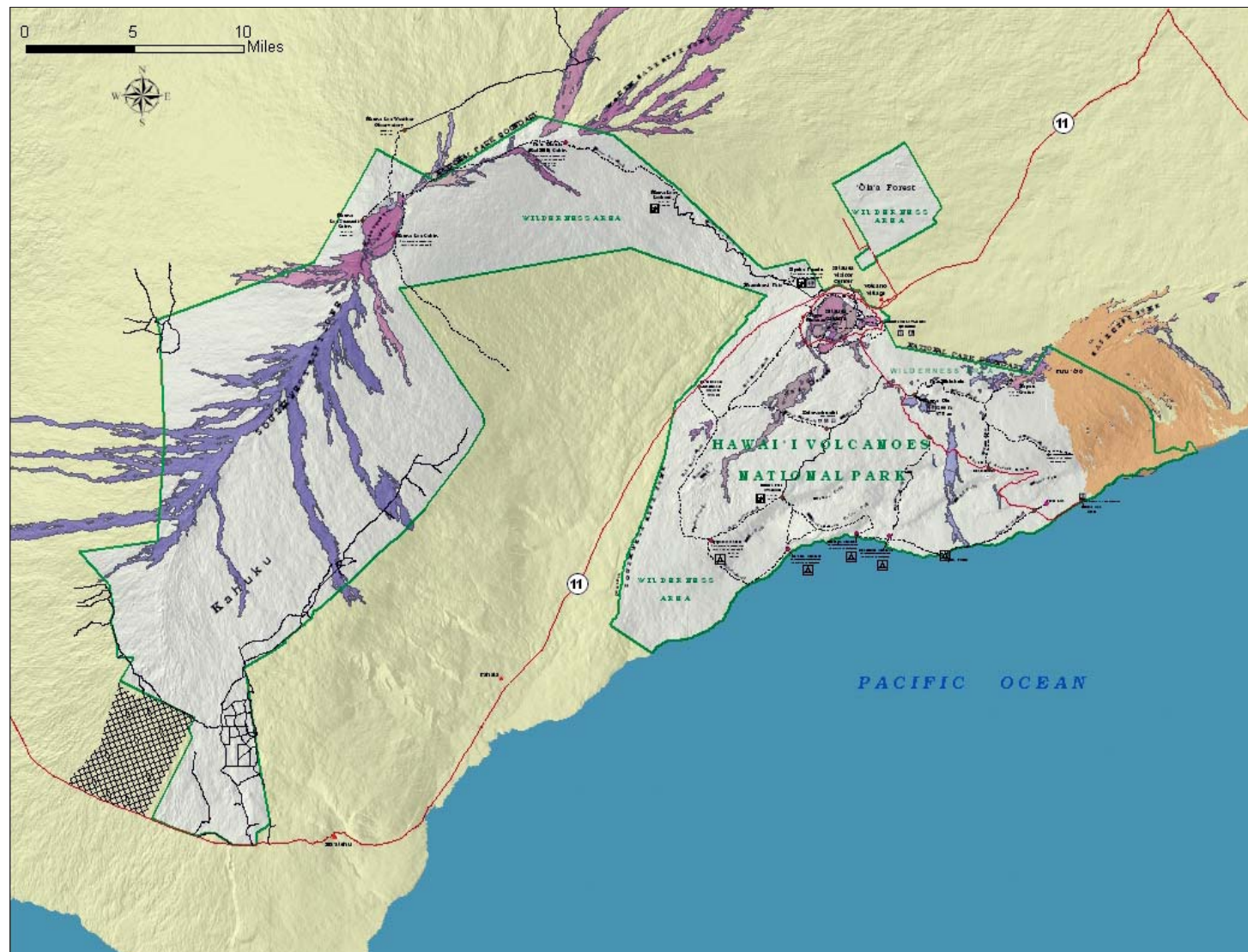
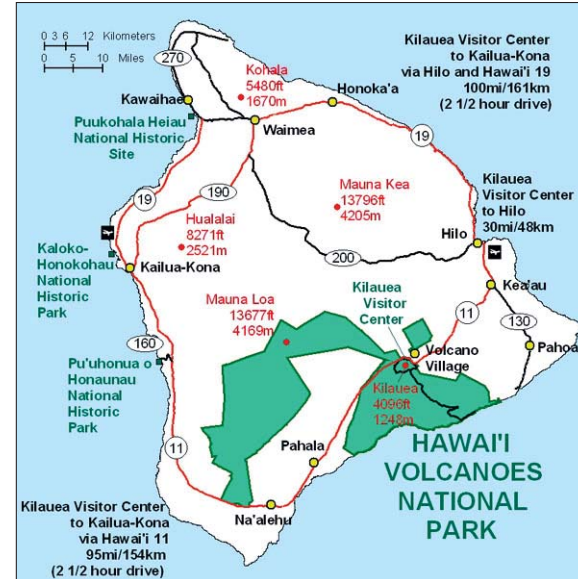


Activity – By law all commercial activities occurring in a park must be authorized and there are commercial activities in the park that may not be authorized. Other authorized operations may not be complying with stipulations in their permits and inappropriate activity may be occurring.

Cultural Sensitivity – How can the sensitivity to cultural traditions around sacred sites and activities be respected and maintained by commercial operations?



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



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The National Park Service is developing a Commercial Services Plan for Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. The plan will identify necessary and appropriate commercial services in the park and the best way for the National Park Service to manage them. At this stage of the process the planning team is developing the framework from which all decisions will be made. Your input at this time is extremely important.

Commercial activities must also comply with these factors and contribute to accomplishment of the goals of the park. They must also comply with the overall National Park Service mandate to preserve and protect the significant resources of a park while making them reasonably available for the use and enjoyment of the visiting public.

You have several options to participate. You may mail your comments on the enclosed response form or drop them off at the park Kilauea Visitor Center. Copies of this document and the comment form will be posted on the park's web site: www.nps.gov/havo. You are also cordially invited to an open house where you can meet with the planning team to discuss your comments, questions, and concerns relevant to the commercial services planning effort.

June 22, 2005.....Nani Mau Gardens,421 Makalika Street, Hilo, Hawaii 96720

June 23, 2005.....Ocean View Community Association, 92-8924 Leilani, Ocean View, Hawaii, 96737



Sincerely,

Cindy Gaudin

Cindy Orlando
Superintendent, Hawaii Volcanoes National Park

The Commerical Services Plan

What Is It?

The Commercial Services Plan (CSP) provides the process for establishing the types and levels of commercial activities necessary and/or appropriate for Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. Commercial activities currently include concession services, non-profit retail sales, and incidental business permits which allow for "permitted" activity. The CSP is an implementation plan, establishing the most effective and efficient methods for the National Park Service (NPS) to manage those activities. This plan is developed with public input. The CSP must comply with applicable laws and policies and must be consistent with the management philosophies found in our park Master and Strategic Plan.

Why Are We Doing This?

In 1998, Congress passed the NPS Concessions Management Improvement Act (PL 105-391), which guides the management of concessions services by the NPS. By law (36 CFR 5.3), all commercial activities that occur within a unit of the National Park System must be formally authorized. The Concession Management Improvement (CMI) Act mandates that all commercial development and services at all NPS units are necessary and/or appropriate to the parks.

Hawaii Volcanoes National Park has a commercial services management program. Contracts and permits authorizing these commercial services have either expired or will soon. This commercial services plan is an essential step in reviewing existing commercial services to ensure they are still necessary and appropriate and authorized properly. The plan will also consider new services and/or improvements to existing services to achieve the desired future commercial services goals of the park.

How Could The Plan Affect Me?

The National Park Service is mandated to preserve and protect nationally significant resources while providing for visitor use and enjoyment of the parks. Existing commercial services will be analyzed to ensure they are not causing unacceptable resource degradation. If changes are required to protect resources it could result in changes to how commercial services are conducted or provided.

Resource preservation is a defining goal for the National Park Service. A careful review and study of carrying capacity will determine acceptable commercial service opportunities related to outdoor activities such as guide services that may affect the natural and cultural resources.

Visitor safety is also an important goal for the National Park Service. Existing and potentially new commercial services will be analyzed to ensure visitors enjoy the safest experience possible, which could result in changes to how existing services are conducted and provided.

The National Park Service has limited interpretive staff and consequently many opportunities are lost to enhance visitor experience through basic interpretation. The plan will examine ways to work with commercial operators who would provide additional services and information.

The lack of knowledge about the NPS "authorizing" process for activity often affects commercial operators. The law states that all commercial activities in parks must be authorized. A uniform policy consistent with the law will be developed in this planning effort to deal with this situation. This could affect some existing commercial operators in the state.

Commercial Services Goals

Where do we want commercial services to be?

The following goals are specific to commercial services:

- Hawaii Volcanoes NP has the staff, funding, and management tools to allow efficient and effective management of the commercial services program.
- Hawaii Volcanoes NP is meeting our fiduciary responsibility for fair return to the government.
- Hawaii Volcanoes NP is able to manage the impact of all authorized and unauthorized commercial activity in the park.
- All visitors are aware of being in a National Park and what the mission of the park is.
- All commercial providers in the park are aware of, participate in, and educate visitors to the mission of Hawaii Volcanoes NP.
- All commercial operators provide visitors with accurate interpretation of the park and resources of the park.
- All commercial recreational activities are compatible with the resources of the park.
- A high level of quality exists for all commercial facilities and services.
- All commercial facilities utilize sustainable technology to the extent possible.
- All commercial operations are environmentally responsible.
- Partnerships to provide compatible commercial recreational activities and services that enhance visitor experience are used to the maximum degree possible.

Issues

What are the obstacles to achieving the goals?

Issues must be addressed in the planning process to ensure the accomplishment of stated goals.

The following is a preliminary list of issues developed by the planning team:

Facilities – Are facilities and some spaces within those facilities currently assigned to commercial operations being used in the most effective and efficient manner? Are there deferred maintenance needs to be addressed? Are there existing facilities that could be used for other park purposes?

Operations – There are concerns about: general maintenance, ambiance, local patron support, hours of operation, flexibility, accessibility, health and safety, reliable service, and archives.

Interpretation – Are all opportunities to enhance visitor education and appreciation being met?

Coordination – Can all commercial operations in the park be coordinated to provide a better range of services for all visitors?



Commerical Services Plan Planning Framework

Park Purpose

Why does the Park exist?

Hawaii Volcanoes National Park exists to:

- protect, study, and monitor volcanic landscapes and processes
- protect, study, and restore native Hawaiian ecosystems and species, many of which are rare or endangered
- protect, preserve, and study cultural resources including landscapes, features, and museum objects
- provide a nurturing environment for the preservation and practice of traditional native Hawaiian culture
- provide opportunities for public education, enjoyment and safe access to the park and it's resources

Park Significance

Why is the Park so special?

Hawaii Volcanoes National Park is significant because:

- the long history and collaborative research of volcanism at the park have made Mauna Loa and Kilauea two of the most studied and best understood active volcanoes in the world
- the approachability to the park's active volcanism affords rare opportunities for fundamental and detailed research, offering relatively safe experiences with lava flows, fountains, and other products of active volcanism
- the park provides a wide variety of habitats for endemic native plants and animals, many of which are threatened or endangered
- the park includes the most extensive tract of montane tropical rain forest under federal protection in the USA
- the cultural resources of the park reflect 900 years of human activity to a dynamic volcanic landscape

- the protected status of the park's cultural and natural resources allows for traditional Hawaiian culture to be practiced and preserved
- the park encompasses the largest expanse of Hawaiian natural environment managed as wilderness
- the park's resources are so rare, valuable, and inspirational to all the people of the world that the United Nations declared the park an International Biosphere Reserve and a World Heritage Site

Mission Goals

What are we planning for?

Consistent with the mission of the National Park Service, the Commercial Services Plan will seek to enhance the following goals:

- That the natural and cultural resources and associated values are protected, restored, and maintained in good condition and managed within their broader ecosystems and cultural contexts.
- That visitors safely enjoy and are satisfied with the availability, accessibility, diversity, and quality of park facilities, services, and appropriate recreational opportunities.
- That visitors and the general public understand and appreciate the preservation of the park and its resources for this and future generations.
- To better preserve park resources and to better provide for public enjoyment and the visitor experience of the park, Hawaii Volcanoes National Park uses current management practices, systems, and technologies to accomplish its mission.

There are some areas within the park without any commercial services. Analysis could indicate that new services might be warranted which would provide new business opportunities in the region.

Several areas have basic commercial services. An analysis could support that the range and quality of services are appropriate, that opportunities for expansion or enhancement exist, or that existing services could be consolidated.

What's Happening Now?

The National Park Service has established a planning team consisting of the Superintendent, senior park management staff, and Regional and Washington Office concession planners. They have established a decision-making framework for the plan based on the park's legislated mandate, mission, and goals. The framework will lead managers through complex deliberations on how to provide appropriate commercial services while managing and protecting park resources. The framework is presented in this newsletter to assist the public in identifying the boundaries of this planning effort.

The planning team is currently reviewing existing commercial services and facilities, identifying issues and challenges, and developing commercial services goals for each unit in Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. Public input on existing conditions, issues, and goals is being solicited through this newsletter and public open houses.

What's Next?

The public is invited to comment on and/or provide input to the planning framework presented in this newsletter. This is a crucial step in the planning process. It establishes the basis for the plan. Alternatives considered and decisions made must comply with the criteria developed in the framework. Some elements of the framework are not negotiable. The National Park Service must comply with the laws that established the park and other applicable laws. The commercial services goals for the park are flexible and should be redefined periodically to reflect current conditions in the park and surrounding communities. Just a reminder, however - all elements must comply with the laws and mandates that govern the park.



The National Park Service uses a "Goal Driven" planning process. Essentially we determine where we are now, where do we want to be, and how do we get there. If a proposal or action does not achieve the goals of where we want to be in the future it is not approved. That is why goal development at this step in the process is so important.

After the framework is developed with public input, alternatives will be developed and an impact analysis conducted (this plan is subject to the National Environmental Policy Act – NEPA). A draft plan will be released for public review and comment. Appropriate comments will be incorporated and a final plan will be published.

How Can You Become Involved?

You can help the National Park Service by getting involved early in the process. Your input at this time will help develop a plan that is responsive to the needs and desires of park management, the visiting public, local communities, and the local business community.

The public is encouraged to review this document to better understand the planning framework limits and constraints and to offer comments on the direction of the plan. To make this process work, and to ensure that the public's views and concerns are addressed, we need your comments, feedback and participation in the upcoming scoping meeting.

You can send us your comments and/or suggestions via e-mail, regular mail, or dropping them off at the park Kilauea Visitor Center. The park address is Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, P.O. Box 52, Hawaii National Park, HI 96718-0052. The e-mail address is havo_superintendent@nps.gov. You can also join our mailing list to receive future newsletters and relevant information providing updates on the planning process.

How Does This Plan Relate To Other Plans?

Several plans already exist for the park and others are either in progress or will begin soon. Each plan is an independent effort although some issues and proposals relate. The CSP will address commercial services issues in the context of necessary and appropriate types and levels of service. Other plans will address management strategies including commercial services. While independent planning efforts, the planning teams will coordinate to ensure comprehensive commercial services strategies exist for the park.

The CSP must comply with higher level plans such as the GMP. Nothing can be proposed that is not addressed in the goals and management direction established in the GMP. The NPS will be developing a new GMP for Hawaii Volcanoes NP in the next few years. An interim operating plan is being prepared now for the Kahuku expansion area. Commercial services issues and proposals for the new area will be identified in the two plans. An Air Tour Management Plan is currently in the environmental review process and information from this scoping effort will be considered in that effort.

The CSP should compliment other implementation plans in achieving the goals of the park. The CSP will comply with resource management direction already established. The CSP effort will ensure the commercial aspects of the management strategies proposed are appropriate.

There are several construction projects underway and planned for the park. The impacts of those on commercial operations will be considered. For example, road construction on Crater Rim Drive will have an impact on visitation patterns to commercial operations in the park.

	Step	Activity	Pubic Involvement Opportunities
We Are Here	1	Project Scoping Planning framework (laws, mandates, mission, goals, issues) developed. (Summer 2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read this newsletter and send us your comments.• Attend public open house.
	2	Develop and Evaluate Alternatives Develop a reasonable range of alternatives consistent with planning framework. The potential consequences of each alternative will be evaluated. (Summer 2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read newsletter and send us your comments.
	3	Prepare and Publish Draft Commercial Services Plan / Environmental Assessment The draft plan will describe the planning issues, manage alternatives (including a preferred), and impacts. (Fall 2005 / Winter 2005/2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read draft plan and send us your comments.• attend public meetings.
	4	Document Decisions and Publish Final Plan The draft plan will be revised based on public comments, further analysis, and additional information. A final plan will be distributed. (Spring 2006)	
	5	Implementation Implementation of the plan will begin. (Summer 2006)	

